

ASK ME ABOUT THE COAST

Points of Interest

A Sense of the Sea

- We have the biggest little coast! New Hampshire's coastline along the Atlantic Shore is 18 miles long, the smallest in New England. Little known fact: we have about 220 shoreline miles of bays, harbors, and tidal rivers, including Great Bay, an "inland sea," and Hampton/Seabrook Estuary.
- New Hampshire's offshore waters are home to the endangered fin whale, which is nothing to snuff at: at an average of 70 feet in length, or about 13 adults laid head to feet, it's the second largest animal on earth!
- New Hampshire's coastal land area drains 990 square miles, including the land area in all or part of 46 New Hampshire towns. Forests, wetlands and other natural areas give us water quality, wildlife habitat, recreation, and scenic views. Population growth and land conversion into homes, parking lots and buildings is happening faster here than in other parts of the state. From 1940-2000, the average annual population increase in Rockingham and Strafford counties was nearly double the state's overall. And the two counties are projected to add more than 100,000 new residents from 2000-2025. Over the past 36 years in Rockingham and Strafford counties, an average of 2,230 acres of land per year has been converted to a developed condition.
- Water quality in Great Bay was improving for many years and is now starting to decline. For instance, nitrogen concentrations increased by 59 percent in the past 25 years; nitrogen increases algae blooms and diminishes habitat for fish and eelgrass.
- Insert your own talking point.

Sources: State of the Estuaries 2006, New Hampshire Estuaries Project; The Land Conservation Plan for New Hampshire's Coastal Watersheds, 2006.

Actions

Dump No More in the Shore!

- D2A2---**Don't Dump Anything Anywhere!** When outside, keep track of all wrappers, cans and other items; leave nothing behind. Don't dump anything, ever, into a storm drain, including dog poop! What goes down there today, ends up in our water bodies tomorrow, polluting places where we boat, swim and fish. Home owners: maintain your septic system; they can be major polluters when not working correctly.

Be wary of the impervious!

- Buildings, houses, driveways, parking lots and roads block the flow of water into the earth, where it would otherwise be absorbed like a sponge. As more development comes, what we do becomes more and more important because the ground is not absorbing the pollution: it's going straight into our waterways! Some actions that help: washing your car on the lawn; landscaping with vegetation, gravel and other porous materials; and limiting your use of fertilizers, or even better, using natural fertilizers, like compost, manure, bone meal or peat.

Get Active!

- Volunteer with an area nonprofit: adopt-a-beach, educate others on coastal resources; join a town board; stay informed of local coastal issues going on in your town.

Insert your own suggested action on how to help our coastal watershed!